



## High Court Broadcasts Argument In Same-Sex Marriage Cases

In an unprecedented outreach effort, the California Supreme Court allowed the California Channel, AOC-TV, C-SPAN, and Court TV to carry live broadcasts of oral argument in two same-sex marriage cases that were being followed by the nation.

The live broadcasts on May 25 were granted in response to the widespread interest in the cases, *Lockyer v. City and County of San Francisco* and *Lewis v. Alfaro*. For two hours the cameras showed attorneys arguing both cases together before the court.

"The media and the courts intersect at numerous points, and their interaction provides a crucial link in our democratic society," said Chief Justice Ronald M. George, speaking at a local media convention prior to the May 25 broadcast. He went on to say that he was "pleased that in recent years our California Supreme Court has been increasingly willing to televise oral

arguments in cases of significant public interest."

### COURT PROVIDES CASE INFORMATION TO MEDIA, PUBLIC

The Supreme Court has devoted a section of the California Courts Web site to the two same-sex marriage cases. The special section ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/supreme/sfmarriages](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/supreme/sfmarriages)) provides news releases pertaining to the cases, information about the attorneys involved, and legal briefs on the issue before the court. This is the first time the court has ever posted legal briefs online. The site also contains information on the history and internal prac-

tices and operations of the court and access to an audio archive of the May 25 oral argument.

"The level of access we were able to provide for the same-sex marriage cases was the result of the time, effort, and dedication of many people from agencies inside and outside the court system," says Frederick "Fritz" Ohlrich, Clerk of the Supreme Court. "Our judicial system requires a knowledgeable and trusting public. Making the courts more accessible is not just good for the public but is a duty of the judicial branch and an important part of the democratic system."

*Continued on page 6*



Attorneys, reporters, and members of the public watched oral argument in two same-sex marriage cases, *Lockyer v. City and County of San Francisco* and *Lewis v. Alfaro*, brought before the California Supreme Court on May 25. Responding to high interest in the cases, the Supreme Court permitted live broadcasts of the hearing and provided a live feed to viewers (pictured) in the auditorium of the Hiram W. Johnson State Office Building in San Francisco, which adjoins the court building. Photo: Jason Doiy

## Judicial Council Welcomes Five New Members

Chief Justice Ronald M. George on June 14 announced the appointment of an appellate court justice, two judges, a court administrator, and an attorney to the Judicial Council.

The appointees are Presiding Justice Candace D. Cooper, Second Appellate District, Division Eight; Presiding Judge Suzanne N. Kingsbury, Superior Court of El Dorado County; Presiding Judge Douglas P. Miller, Superior Court of Riverside County; Tamara Lynn Beard, Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Fresno County; and James E. Herman, former president of the State Bar of California and partner in the Santa Barbara law firm Reicker, Pfau, Pyle, McRoy & Herman. All the new members were appointed for three-year terms that begin on September 15.

Chaired by the Chief Justice, the Judicial Council consists of 14 members appointed by the Chief Justice, 4 attorney members named by the State Bar Board of Governors, 1 member from each house of the Legislature, and 6 advisory members.

Members of the council are selected through a nominating procedure designed to attract applicants from throughout the legal system, with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and geographic locations. The council's Executive and Planning Committee solicits nominations and applications for the positions appointed by the Chief Justice and then forwards the names of

three nominees for each position. The committee gives added consideration to persons who have served on Judicial Council advisory committees or task forces. Terms on the council are staggered, with one-third of the council's membership changing each year.

Following is a summary of the new appointees' backgrounds.

**Presiding Justice Candace D. Cooper** of the Second Appellate District, Division Eight, will replace Justice Norman L. Epstein of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Four. Justice Cooper was elevated to her current position in 2001, having served previously as associate justice in Division Two (1999-2001), on the Los Angeles Superior Court (1987-1999), and on the Los Angeles Municipal Court (1980-1987).

Justice Cooper served an earlier term on the council, from 1988 to 1989, as president of the California Judges Association. She has been active in numerous Judicial Council activities, is the current chair of the council's Judicial Service Advisory Committee (2001-present), and served as chair of the council's *Brown v. Board of Education* Planning Committee (2003-2004). Justice Cooper is also active in numerous professional and community organizations, including the California Women Lawyers Association, Langston Bar Association, and California Association of Black Lawyers.

**Presiding Judge Suzanne N. Kingsbury** of the Superior Court of El Dorado County will replace Judge William C. Harrison of the Superior Court of Solano County. Presiding Judge Kingsbury was elected to the superior court in 1996, becoming the first female superior court judge in El Dorado County history. She has served as presiding judge of the court for the last five years.

Presiding Judge Kingsbury currently serves as vice-chair of the Judicial Council's Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee and is a member of the Task Force on Judicial Ethics Issues and Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants. She has served as a faculty member and an advisor to several programs for the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER).

*Continued on page 7*

### IN THIS ISSUE

SUPREME COURT BROADCAST.....	1
NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS .....	1
MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE.....	2
JUDICIAL COUNCIL ACTION.....	3
IN THE NEWS .....	4
HR UPDATE .....	5
MOVERS & SHAKERS.....	5
REGIONAL OFFICES UPDATE.....	6
RIVERSIDE TRIMS CRIMINAL BACKLOG.....	7
APPELLATE ANNIVERSARY .....	7
FOSTER CARE REPORT...	8
LAW DAY REVISITED .....	9
SAN MATEO NEWSLETTER FOR LOCAL BAR.....	9
Q&A WITH COURT EXECUTIVE TRESSA S. KENTNER .....	10
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.....	11
DRUG COURT MONTH..	11
JUDGE DONALD E. SHAVER: MENTAL HEALTH COURTS .....	12
EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT .....	13
RESOURCES.....	14
COURT BRIEFS .....	14
MILESTONES.....	15
AOC-TV GUIDE .....	15
CALENDAR.....	16

**TechGuide Inside!**

TechGuide offers information on how courts and judicial officers are using technology, as well as tips and tricks for computer users. TechGuide comes to its readers from the Center for Judicial Education and Research as an insert in Court News. See the center pages of this issue.



Chief Justice  
Ronald M.  
George

#### MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE

## Shedding Light on the Courts

*Chief Justice Ronald M. George on May 21 addressed the attendees of the California Society of Newspaper Editors' annual convention in San Diego. The Chief stressed the importance of the news media to a free society and detailed efforts by the courts to open up their operations to public scrutiny. Following is an excerpt from his remarks.*

The media and the courts intersect at numerous points, and their interaction provides a crucial link in our democratic society. Courts rely on the trust and confidence of those they serve in functioning as the strong and independent branch of government envisioned by our Constitution. And the media are the primary source of information for the public about the judicial system. Newspapers, in particular, are essential to provide the kind of in-depth coverage that aids the public in understanding our system. As judges and journalists gain more knowledge about each other, it enables all of us to do a better job. . . .

#### COURTS AND MEDIA SHARE CONCERNS

It should not be very surprising that the media and the courts naturally share many concerns. Essentially, we both are in public service, and both are essential to maintaining a strong and effective democracy. Our respective functions require us to make accurate information available and accessible to the widest audience. And we share the challenge of fulfilling our responsibilities despite limited resources.

The press and the courts each have integral roles to play that are fundamental to the protection of the public and the core values of our nation. These demands often find us heading in the same direction. Yet at other times, they require the thoughtful weighing and consideration of what sometimes may seem to be competing interests and expectations. Our joint continued focus on the public interest and on open communication with each other can best help resolve these occasionally differing demands. . . .

#### PUBLIC ACCESS

Many of the changes that already have occurred deal directly with increasing public access to the courts, as well as providing information about how courts spend their money and make significant administrative decisions. For example, the Judicial Council at recent meetings has engaged in an extensive public discussion of the judicial branch budget and the impact of potential reductions—with input presented by users of the court system.

On the local level, the Judicial Council has adopted a rule requiring individual courts to provide quarterly financial reports, which are to be made available to the public. The Administrative Office of the Courts, the Judicial Council's staff arm, is working with the local court leadership to facilitate their compliance with this rule.

The culture of the courts generally is undergoing a significant shift in response to changes and new expectations. We have been exploring the ways in which appropriate information concerning the courts can be made available to the public. For example, courts have been hospitable to claims for information that previously may not have been released or made available due to long-standing—but unexamined—practices or traditions. The California Supreme Court, in *NBC Subsidiary v. Superior Court* (1999) 20 Cal.4th 1178, in an opinion I authored for the court, held that the press and the public have a right to be present during all proceedings in a civil trial—not just at a criminal trial. Only if the court articulates an “overriding interest” may the courtroom be closed. . . .

#### ELECTRONIC RECORDS

The availability of electronic court records has highlighted the need to balance the public's interest in convenient access to court records with the privacy concerns of victims, witnesses, and parties. Rule 2073 prohibits courts from posting complete case records on the Internet; in certain types of cases, including generally criminal, juvenile, mental health, and family law cases, only the indexes, registers of actions, and court calendars may be posted to the Internet.

Earlier this year, however, the Judicial Council, in a tie vote broken by my affirmative vote, approved rule 2073.5, which provides for an exception allowing remote electronic access to certain information in high-profile criminal cases under specified conditions. This new rule reflects the exigencies facing the press and court personnel in meeting the extraordinary demand for access to court documents in recent high-profile cases.

#### WEB SITES AND KIOSKS

Public access and effective communication have been enhanced by our courts in ways beyond judicial decisions and rule making. An award-winning Web site designed to assist self-represented litigants—and others interested in understanding the legal process—provides a broad array of tools and information designed to assist parties in family law, landlord-tenant, conservatorship, and domestic violence matters.

The site has links to local court Web pages, legal service providers, domestic violence shelters, and assorted other services. It provides step-by-step directions for how to proceed in certain matters, and offers directions for obtaining additional information. The site has had millions of hits since its inception—not only from self-represented litigants but also from librarians, journalists, and even lawyers—and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. The site is available in Spanish; parts are being translated into other languages, and more translations and expanded services are contemplated in order to accommodate California's multicultural population. Imagine: we have more than 100 languages translated in California's courts—literally everything from A to Z, from Albanian to Zapotec.

This is not the only way in which technology has been employed to provide new services. In-court kiosks in many locations provide forms (and information on how to complete them) or permit payment of traffic tickets. Online access to clerks' offices allows litigants and lawyers—and the press—to obtain up-to-date information on the status of cases. And Supreme Court opinions are available electronically within seconds of their posting at the clerk's counter. . . .

#### BECOMING MORE TRANSPARENT

I could continue with other examples, but will stop here. I hope I have conveyed to you some of the enthusiasm that exists in the courts and the excitement that has been generated by the many new programs and innovations that have been started over the past few years. Our court system has fully embraced the goal of improving access to justice at every level. Whether it is providing more information about how we operate, becoming more transparent and accountable for our use of public resources, or offering the tools that enable more members of the public to obtain the court services to which they are entitled, California's judicial system has acted to realize these goals.

To remain effective, the courts must rely on the trust and confidence of the public we serve. We take very seriously the responsibility of earning that trust. We recognize that as members of the media, you are not there to serve as cheerleaders for the courts—you are there to investigate, inform, and illuminate. You serve as the public's eyes and ears on the courts.

Although the courts cannot and do not rely on the media alone to educate and reach the public, we are committed to working with you to provide information that offers a fuller picture about the vital role and responsibilities that an independent judicial system—like an independent press—plays in our democratic society. . . .

I would like to close with a quotation from an opinion written by my colleague, the late Justice Stanley Mosk, who served a remarkable 37 years on our state Supreme Court—almost one-quarter the history of California. He wrote in *Times Mirror Co. v. Superior Court* (1991) 53 Cal.3d 1325, 1348: “[T]he lessons of history tell us over and over that secrecy in government . . . causes lack of public confidence and various other ills. We would do well to heed the words of Justice Brandeis: ‘Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants.’”

Take  
Note

For the full  
text of the  
Chief Justice's  
remarks at

the California Society of  
Newspaper Editors' annual  
convention, visit the  
California Courts Web site  
at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/speech052104)  
/reference/speech052104.





## In the News

# L.A. Court Holds DUI Trial at High School

Two recent articles in Los Angeles-area publications detailed a program that gives teenagers a first-hand look at the consequences of driving under the influence.

The stories appeared in the April 15 issue of the *Los Angeles Daily Journal* and the April 16 issue of the *Los Angeles Times*. They described a program organized by the Claremont Police Department and the Superior Court of Los Angeles County in which actual DUI trials are conducted at community venues away from the courtroom.

In conjunction with Alcohol Education Week, the court on April 14 held a DUI trial at Claremont High School, involving a defendant accused of driving under the influence. The event was the first of seven criminal trials to be held in Los Angeles County by the end of 2005, funded through an "Avoid the 50 DUI Teen Choices" grant made to the Claremont Police Department.

The DUI trials are one component of a countywide effort to focus attention on the consequences of drinking and driving. The stories that appeared in the Los Angeles publications are one component of the court's efforts to publicize its innovative work in the community.

Other courts in the news:

**'Students Get a Glimpse Into the Inner Workings of a Judge's Mind,'** *San Mateo County Times*, May 27, 2004

Highlighted a Superior Court of San Mateo County program in which judges visit schools to talk to students about the law and the court system.

**'Keeping Teens Out of Trouble,'** *Santa Clarita Signal*, May 24, 2004

Described an informational session coordinated by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County's juvenile drug court to give parents an overview of the drug court program and help them recognize trouble signs in their own children.

**'Jury No-Shows Face Penalties,'** *Press Telegram* (Long Beach), May 21, 2004

Reported that the Superior Court of Los Angeles County would dedicate courtrooms around the county to handling sanction hearings for citizens who refuse to fulfill their jury service.

**'Office Aims to Help People Navigate Courts,'** *Desert Sun* (Palm Springs), May 19, 2004; **'Legal Self-Help Center in Indio,'** *Desert Sun* (Palm Springs), May 15, 2004; **'Legal Self-Help Center Opening Friday in Indio,'** *Desert Sun* (Palm Springs), May 4, 2004

Announced the opening of the Superior Court of Riverside County's legal self-help center in Indio and described how it assists litigants in filling out forms and understanding court procedures.

**'Drug Court: A Tough Program,'** *Ukiah Daily Journal*, May 16, 2004

Featured the Superior Court of Mendocino County's adult drug court, which is helping nonviolent offenders get treatment instead of jail time.

**'Care and Feeding of Yolo Jurors,'** *Daily Democrat* (Woodland), May 11, 2004

Reported that the Superior Court of Yolo County was treating its jurors with extra care during Jury Appreciation Week, recognizing the vital role they play in the justice system.

**'Teens Are a Law to Themselves at Alameda Youth Court,'** *Oakland Tribune*, May 9, 2004

Highlighted the 10th anniversary of the county's youth court and mentioned the funding shortages the program is experiencing.

**'Courts Open Doors for Community Law Night,'** *Tribune* (San Luis Obispo), May 2, 2004

Announced the San Luis Obispo County court's second annual Community Law Night, where attendees learn about pressing legal issues, meet with judges, and have the opportunity to find out about community agencies that offer legal assistance.

**'Jury Duty: Rules Are Rarely Enforced,'** *Tulare Advance-Register*, May 1, 2004

Featured Superior Court of Tulare County Presiding Judge Paul Vortmann demystifying jury service and explaining the process of empaneling juries.



Two stories that recently appeared in Los Angeles publications described a program organized by the Claremont Police Department and the Superior Court of Los Angeles County in which actual DUI trials are conducted at community venues away from the courtroom. Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

**'Court Lets Addicts Start Over,'** *Davis Enterprise*, April 29, 2004

Described Yolo County's drug courts, including news of the recent 10-person class of graduates from the felony probation drug court—the largest group to graduate from that program since it began in 1999.

**'Missing That Court Date Could Turn Into an Arrest,'** *West Sacramento Press*, April 28, 2004

Featured the Tip of the Week column compiled by Superior Court of Yolo County Judge David Rosenberg, in which he offers information on arrest warrants, the free legal clinics that the court offers, and attending hearings.

**'Courthouse Turns 25: Building Overcame Early Obstacles,'** *Argus (Fremont)*, April 26, 2004

Highlighted the Fremont Hall of Justice in Alameda on its 25th anniversary.

**'Going Online Tops Waiting in Line,'** *Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 2004

Discussed the Los Angeles County court's slogan "Don't Wait in Line: GO ONLINE!" The slogan is aimed at alerting court users to the expanded public access to online court records and information.

**'Court Will Not Close, Judge Says,'** *Courier-News (Crestline)*, April 22, 2004

Reported that Superior Court of San Bernardino County Presiding Judge Peter H. Norell addressed a group of community leaders to inform them that the Twin Peaks courthouse would remain open despite budget cuts.

**'Fresno Courthouse Bill Heads to Bush,'** *Fresno Bee*, April 22, 2004; **'Bill on Courthouse Ownership Advances,'** *Fresno Bee*, April 8, 2004

Provided an update on legislation that would transfer the current downtown federal courthouse to the county for a nominal fee.

**'Salinas Courtroom Honors Drug Treatment Advocate,'** *Monterey Herald*, April 17, 2004

Detailed Monterey County's drug court program and the renaming of a drug treatment courtroom in Salinas to honor Lee Toler, a former counselor to numerous youths involved in drugs and crime.

**'Butte Drug Court a Model for Many Others,'** *Oroville Mercury Register*, April 17, 2004

Featured the Superior Court of Butte County's drug court, a mentor court that recently hosted a training program for more than 100 visitors from around the nation who came to learn how to implement drug courts in their jurisdictions.

**'The Wedding Planner: A Look at Courthouse's Go-To Person for Nuptials,'** *Lodi News-Sentinel*, April 16, 2004

Featured one of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County's judicial clerks who is in charge of booking weddings to be performed by the court's judicial officers.

**'Three New Courtrooms Set for Completion in May,'** *Times Standard (Eureka)*, April 8, 2004

Announced improvements made to the Eureka courthouse in Humboldt County, including new courtrooms, telecommunications upgrades, and ventilation systems.

**'Budget Cuts Are Leaving Night Courts in the Dark,'** *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 2004

Described successful and convenient night court programs for the public in Los Angeles, Orange, and Santa Cruz Counties that are being threatened by reductions in court budgets. ■



HR Update

# Enhanced Services for Payroll, Labor Relations

MASTER AGREEMENT  
FOR PAYROLL

Since January 2004, six superior courts have signed up for the judicial branch’s voluntary statewide master agreement with Automated Data Processing (ADP) for payroll services. These courts—the Superior Courts of Butte, El Dorado, Monterey, San Benito, Sutter, and Tulare Counties—bring to 15 the total number of courts that have signed up. Four additional courts are scheduled to enter into the master agreement by January 2005.

The master agreement includes a 10 percent discount after the branch enrolls 1,000 employees in the ADP payroll system. Courts that have signed up this year have pushed the branch above the 1,000 mark, making all California courts now eligible for the discount.

● For more information, contact Glenn Fong, AOC Human Resources Management Systems Unit, 415-865-4288; e-mail: glenn.fong@jud.ca.gov.

LABOR RELATIONS  
FORUMS

Redesigned statewide forums for human resources personnel in the courts offer opportunities to discuss challenging issues, solve common problems, and share information related to labor relations.

In response to suggestions from the courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) retooled the forums to turn them from quarterly regional teleconferences into statewide in-person forums devoted exclusively to labor relations and collective bargaining. Court representatives at the forums can share best

practices, participate in roundtable discussions, and receive legislative and case law updates. Labor relations experts from the courts and the AOC, as well as stakeholders in the industry, help lead the events.

The first statewide labor relations forum was held on June 29 at the AOC’s Southern Regional Office in Burbank. The next forum is scheduled for October 7 at the AOC’s Northern/Central Regional Office in Sacramento.

● For more information, contact Maria Topete, AOC Labor and Employee Relations Unit, 415-865-4309; e-mail: maria.topete@jud.ca.gov.

TRAINING ON EMPLOYEE  
DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

The AOC’s Labor and Employee Relations Unit provides training on issues related to employee

discipline procedures.

AOC staff members traveled to Del Norte and Merced Counties in April and to Santa Cruz and Yolo Counties in June to train court supervisors on progressive discipline, pre-removal due process hearings, the types of notice and materials that must be provided before implementing discipline, appropriate persons to serve as the neutral hearing officer, and the employee’s right to representation during an investigative interview.

The AOC is making the training available to all superior courts by request.

● For more information, contact Brian Taylor, AOC Labor and Employee Relations Unit, 415-865-8832; e-mail: brian.taylor@jud.ca.gov. ■

## MOVERS and SHAKERS

### Mary Joy Quinn

MARK POTHIER

“We live in a rights-based society,” says Mary Joy Quinn, Director of Probate for the Superior Court of San Francisco County. “But only if you can claim those rights.”

It is people who are incapable of fully understanding or simply unaware of their rights—particularly the frail elderly—that Ms. Quinn serves. When she describes the situation of a hypothetical client, it becomes evident that she knows the needs of this population.

“An elderly man may suffer from impaired judgment and memory deficits due to Alzheimer’s disease. He may also be susceptible to ‘undue influence.’ He is dependent on those around him for decision making and even personal care. He might be vulnerable to a cold call from a ‘trust mill’ and end up making a trust that does not meet his needs. A stranger, neighbor, or even a housekeeper could marry him and take everything he has. There is a possibility that he could be induced to sign over his car, his house, or his bank account.”

When a petition for conservatorship is filed, a probate court investigator makes contact with the elder to assess the person’s condition and go over his or her rights. If the petition is granted and a lay conservator is appointed at the Superior Court of San Francisco County, the conservator receives training from a program that Ms. Quinn helped develop. All lay conservators are ordered by the court to take free classes through the Conservator Education Program, taught by professional conservators who volunteer their time. The program makes extensive use of the *Handbook for Conservators*, a Judicial Council publication to which Ms. Quinn contributed.

ROAD TO PROBATE COURT

It was a relatively straight path that brought Ms. Quinn to develop this and other innovative services in probate court. Growing up, she had a close relationship with her grandfather, helping out summers at his general store—post office—gas station in western Montana. After becoming a public health nurse in 1973, Ms. Quinn began her life-long focus on elder care,

first working as a nurse at the Geriatric Day Treatment Center in San Francisco and eventually becoming its director.

The center, housed in a church, was part of the federally funded mental health system and one of the first mental health treatment programs for elders in the United States. When Ms. Quinn went on to specialize in gerontology while earning an M.A. in clinical psychology, the field was brand new. The concept of “elder abuse and neglect” was practically unheard of at that time, let alone addressed as the national epidemic that it later was understood to be.

In 1977 Ms. Quinn became a conservatorship investigator at the San Francisco Superior Court, visiting adults (mainly elders), educating them about their rights, and meeting with their doctors, caregivers, and attorneys. It was then that she became acutely aware of the need to educate conservators and related third parties about the issues affecting their charges. In her spare time, she co-authored the book *Elder Abuse and Neglect: Causes, Diagnosis and Intervention Strategies*, now in its second edition.

Soon after becoming director of probate in 1989, Ms. Quinn launched several other effective, low-cost initiatives at the San Francisco County court. For instance, pro bono mediation programs were established, with volunteer attorneys receiving training and providing mediation at no charge.

When Ms. Quinn and her colleagues “realized we were appointing guardians that we may never hear from again,” they developed the Guardianship Monitoring Program. Begun in 1994 by Ms. Quinn and Judge Isabella Horton Grant in collaboration with the American Association of Retired Persons, the program recruits, trains, and supervises volunteer retirees who monitor guardians of children. Volunteers make home visits and reports from schools and medical providers to ensure that the goals of the guardianship law are achieved and court orders followed. According to Ms. Quinn, it is the only program of its type in the country and has won an award from the

National Association of Court Managers. “I like innovation and establishing programs and sharing new ideas, getting things running,” says Ms. Quinn. She has just put the finishing touches on the final manuscript of her second book (written on her own time), *Guardianships of Adults: Achieving Justice, Autonomy, and Safety*, to be published by Springer this fall.



- MARY JOY QUINN**  
Director of Probate, Superior Court of San Francisco County  
1989–present
- Conservatorship Investigator, San Francisco Superior Court  
1977–1989
- Director, Geriatric Day Treatment Center, San Francisco Council of Churches  
1975–1977
- Consulting Nurse, San Francisco Council of Churches  
1973–1975
- Public Health Nurse, City of San Francisco  
1966–1973
- Committees and Commissions**  
American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging  
2002–present
- Judicial Council Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee  
2000–present
- National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse  
1995–present

## Update From AOC Regional Offices

# Court Collections, Consulting, Security

*The three regional offices of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) enable the Judicial Council, the AOC, and the courts to act effectively as partners in addressing local needs and fulfilling new state-level responsibilities. The regional offices are located in Burbank, Sacramento, and San Francisco. Following is an update on some of their recent activities.*

### COURT COLLECTIONS

The Collaborative Court-County Working Group on Enhanced Collections has developed recommendations for improving the collection of court fees and penalties. The group's draft report was mailed to courts, counties, and other interested parties in June for their review and comment. The report was also posted through mid-July on the Invitations to Comment page of the California Courts public Web site.

Following the passage and signing of Senate Bill 940 in September 2003, the Judicial Council and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) appointed 20 members—representing courts, counties, and state agencies—to the new Collaborative Court-County Working Group on Enhanced Collections, chaired by AOC Regional Administrative Director Sheila Gonzalez. The group was charged with making recommendations to the council on guidelines for a comprehensive statewide court collections program.

The working group plans to submit a final version of its report at the Judicial Council's August 27 business meeting.

### Standardizing Fines and Fees

A working group subcommittee, chaired by Superior Court of Sierra County Judge William W. Pangman, created a standardized fine and fee schedule for use by judicial officers and their staffs. The first phase in the introduction of the schedule is an Excel spreadsheet that is avail-

able for review and public comment as part of the working group's report.

The subcommittee anticipates that a more user-friendly Access database will be available by October. In the long term, the working group will explore integrating the schedule into the California Case Management System, which is being tested by multiple courts.

### Judicial College Course

Presiding Judge Douglas P. Miller of the Superior Court of Riverside County taught a new course in June at the B. E. Witkin Judicial College of California. The course focused on restitution, fines, fees, and fee waivers. It was offered through the AOC Education Division/Center for Judicial Education and Research to enhance judicial officers' and court staffs' knowledge of fines and fees and the authority for collecting court-ordered debt. The course will become an annual offering at the judicial college.

### Regional Workshops

The regional offices this summer hosted workshops for court-county teams on best practices in court collections, recommended guidelines and standards, and reporting requirements. The faculty gave technical assistance to workshop participants and illustrated the collection models being used by certain courts. A team of participants from each county had an opportunity to collaboratively develop an action plan.

### Hard-to-Collect Fines

In coordination with the Collaborative Court-County Working Group on Enhanced Collections, the AOC sent out a statewide request for proposals for the collection of hard-to-collect fines and delinquent cases. AOC staff coordinated a preproposal conference on June 2, which 18 vendors attended.

The AOC expects to choose a vendor by the end of August. Once a contract is in place, any

court or county will be able to use the vendor if it so desires.

● For more information about collections programs or upcoming trainings, contact Jessica Lee, AOC Southern Regional Office, 818-558-3068; e-mail: [jessica.lee@jud.ca.gov](mailto:jessica.lee@jud.ca.gov).

### COURT CONSULTING SERVICES

Regional meetings on improving the management of court records were held in June in response to interest from the trial courts. Last year, the AOC's Court Consulting Services group surveyed the trial courts to identify areas of operations in which courts wanted technical assistance. The courts cited records management as the area in which training would be the most beneficial.

At the regional meetings, courts described problems and solutions concerning both case-related records (case files in varied media, registers, indexes, exhibits, reporters' notes, and electronic recordings of proceedings) and operational or administrative records (finance, human resources, and other business operations). Discussions of case-related records involved the issues of case record creation; active case updating, storage, and retrieval; and case file retention and destruction. The meetings also focused on courts' evolving responsibility for aspects of handling administrative records that were previously court functions.

Based on discussions at the meetings, AOC staff is preparing a records management improvement plan and an effective practices report. These documents will help courts share effective practices and assist in the development of branchwide efficiencies and improvements in records management.

In the meantime, a newly revamped section of Serranus (<http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/courtrec/>) assists trial courts in implementing leg-

islative and Judicial Council requirements related to the management of court records. The site includes relevant statutes, standards of judicial administration, and council forms as well as information on retention, management, and destruction of case documents and administrative and financial records.

### Caseflow Management

Courts' responses to the technical assistance survey also indicated a need for help with criminal caseflow management. The AOC, in coordination with court leaders, will retain a consultant to conduct regional training and focus groups on this topic later in the year. The training will review accepted principles and present effective practices in the management of criminal cases.

● For more information, contact Fred Miller, Court Consulting Services, Bay Area/Northern Coastal Regional Office, 415-865-7709; e-mail: [fred.miller@jud.ca.gov](mailto:fred.miller@jud.ca.gov).

### COURT SECURITY CONFERENCE

The AOC and the California State Sheriffs Association (CSSA) are co-sponsoring a Court Security Seminar on September 15–17 in San Diego. Topics will include contract and labor practices, best practices in court security, high-profile and high-security trials, and continuity of operations in emergencies.

The seminar was developed by CSSA's Court Security Committee with input from sheriffs and court staff members. The faculty will include experts from law enforcement and the Justice Management Institute.

● For more information and to register, contact Yvonne Choong, AOC Northern/Central Regional Office, 916-263-1462; e-mail: [yvonne.choong@jud.ca.gov](mailto:yvonne.choong@jud.ca.gov). ■



## Same-Sex Marriage

*Continued from page 1*

### ISSUES BEFORE COURT AND PUBLIC AUDIENCE

By a unanimous vote on March 11, the Supreme Court issued an order to show cause in each same-sex marriage case. The orders direct San Francisco officials to demonstrate why they had not exceeded their authority in issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on the basis of their own view that the existing marriage statutes were unconstitutional, before any court had issued a judicial determination on that issue. The orders are specifically limited to this legal ques-

tion and do not address the substantive constitutional challenge to the California marriage statutes themselves.

The Supreme Court issued an additional order on April 14, asking the parties to submit briefings on whether the court should determine, in these two cases, the validity of same-sex marriages that already had been performed and registered by the City and County of San Francisco. The May 25 oral argument session provided a forum for both sides to present their cases to the justices in person.

### NEXT MOVE BY COURT

The court has 90 days after hearing oral argument to release a decision in a case. Therefore, the

court must render its decision in the same-sex marriage cases by late August.

The Supreme Court has been praised in legal circles and in the media for its decision to open up its proceedings to the public. A recent article in the *Daily Journal* stated that “educating the general public about the workings of their highest court, the gavel-to-gavel coverage was television—and the court—at its best.” ■



# Riverside Civil Judges Trim Criminal Backlog

BLAINE CORREN

For three weeks in June, the Superior Court of Riverside County reassigned all 12 of its civil judges to hear criminal cases. The reassigned jurists significantly reduced a substantial backlog in criminal cases awaiting trial, ensuring that the court could continue to try defendants under speedy trial mandates.

"It was very successful, maybe even more successful than we envisioned," says Presiding Judge Douglas P. Miller. "It worked because of the cooperative efforts from the judges, court staff, district attorney, public defender, and our conflicts panel."

## CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF CRIMINAL COURTROOMS

At the beginning of June, more than 500 criminal defendants were awaiting trial at the superior court in Riverside. With criminal cases continuing to accumulate and the court out of options, Presiding Judge Miller announced that the county would be forced to temporarily close the county's 12 civil courtrooms at the Riverside and Indio courthouses.

“We had been contemplating the decision for several weeks,” says Presiding Judge Miller. “We were having significant problems with last-day trials.”

By law, courts must try felony cases within 60 days of arraignment unless the defendant requests a waiver. Misdemeanor cases must go to trial within 30 days if the defendant is in jail or within 45 days if the defendant is not in custody. Presiding Judge Miller acknowledges that, due to the backlog in criminal cases, the court was often forced to try defendants on the last day before the statutory deadline.

The court formed a county-wide committee of calendar judges, chaired by former Presiding Judge Christian F. Thierbach, to address the problem. After assessing the workload and talking with judges and court staff, the committee recommended the temporary closure of civil courtrooms countywide until criminal cases could be cut down to a workable number.

“Last year, we had a similar problem in our Indio courthouse,” says Presiding Judge Miller. “We suspended civil trials there for six to eight weeks, and it made a significant impact.”

## EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS

The civil judges heard criminal cases from June 7 to June 25. More than 100 civil trials were postponed. However, the court continued to hold fast-track conferences and law and motion

of Riverside County will replace Judge Barbara A. Zúñiga of the Superior Court of Contra Costa County. He serves on the council's Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee, the Trial Court Executive Management Budget Working Group, and the Presiding Judges and Court Executives Legislation Subcommittee (which he co-chairs). He also serves on CJER's Civil Law Education Committee.

Presiding Judge Miller served from 1999 to 2002 on the board of directors of the California Judges Association. Locally,

calendars, hear small claims cases, and process civil harassment orders.

“Our goal was to have enough judges available to begin hearing criminal cases by the 8th day rather than the 10th day after setting them for trial,” says Presiding Judge Miller. “It became clear that civil judges’ services were no longer needed when cases started to be called for trial on the first or second day. It was so successful that at a certain point we didn’t have enough criminal cases to fill all the available courtrooms in the civil department.”

Many civil attorneys voiced concern about the court's suspending civil trials countywide, says Presiding Judge Miller. "We met with the local bar association

and held a forum on June 11 to explain the necessity for the decision. They weren't happy about it, but understood the public safety aspects of bringing criminal defendants to trial on time."

Due to the rapid increase in the county's population and a corresponding increase in crime, Presiding Judge Miller does not see the problem going away. "We're trying to come up with long-term solutions to this countywide problem. We are meeting with the district attorney and the public defender to come up with solutions, such as having a judge assigned to preside over settlement conferences in criminal cases."

● For more information, contact the Superior Court of Riverside County, 909-955-2352. ■

## Courts of Appeal Turn 100

PAULA BOCCIARDI

This November marks the 100th anniversary of the constitutional amendment that established the first three Courts of Appeal in California. The amendment became effective in January 1905, and the first judicial appointments were made in April of that year.

In the coming months, Chief Justice Ronald M. George will coordinate with appellate court leaders and the Administrative Office of the Courts on how best to commemorate the anniversary. In addition, the Chief has appointed a steering committee that will help design and plan anniversary events.

Among other things, a statewide event to be held in conjunction with next spring's Appellate Justices Institute in Los Angeles will commemorate the anniversary and acknowledge the contributions of the Courts of Appeal to the rule of law and to the lives of state residents. The branch also plans to develop educational materials to increase public awareness of the history, role, and structure of the court system.

● For more information, contact Marcia Taylor, Director, AOC Appellate and Trial Court Judicial Services Division, 415-865-4255; e-mail: [marcia.taylor@jud.ca.gov](mailto:marcia.taylor@jud.ca.gov).

## New JC Members

Continued from page 1

In her community, Presiding Judge Kingsbury is on the Criminal Justice Curriculum Advisory Committee at Lake Tahoe Community College. She was president of the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and served on the boards of the Sierra Recovery Center and the Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation.

**Presiding Judge Douglas  
P. Miller** of the Superior Court



Three of the five new members of the Judicial Council are (from left) Presiding Judge Suzanne N. Kingsbury, Superior Court of El Dorado County; Presiding Judge Douglas P. Miller, Superior Court of Riverside County; and Tamara Lynn Beard, Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Fresno County. (Not pictured: Presiding Justice Candace D. Cooper, Second Appellate District, Division Eight, and James E. Herman, a partner in the Santa Barbara law firm Reicker, Pfau, Pyle, McRoy & Herman.)

he is a founding member and member of the board of directors of the Warren E. Slaughter American Inn of Court. He is also a founding member of the Bench/Bar/Media Group and the Government in Action Program.

**James E. Herman**, a partner with the Santa Barbara law firm Reicker, Pfau, Pyle, McRoy & Herman, will replace Thomas J. Warwick of the San Diego law firm Grimes & Warwick. Mr. Herman was named to the council in March by the State Bar Board of Governors.

During 2002 and 2003, Mr. Herman served as president of the State Bar of California. As a member of the State Bar Board of Governors, he chaired the Planning, Program Development, and Budget Committee and the Review Panel of the Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission. He served on the Committee on Regulation and Discipline, the Legislative and Courts Committee, and the Futures Committee. He also served as State Bar liaison to the California Judges Association and currently is a member of the California Commission on Access to Justice.

**Tamara Lynn Beard** (advisory member), Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Fresno County, will replace Susan Null, Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Shasta County.

Ms. Beard has two decades of experience in court administration and has actively served on numerous court-related, community, and Judicial Council committees. These include the council's Court Executives Advisory Committee (1996–1999, 2001–2003), the Administrative Working Group for Senate Bill 371 Interpreter Employment Implementation (2002–2003), and the Presiding Judges and Court Executives Education Committee of CJER (2002–present).

During her tenure as court executive, Ms. Beard has successfully implemented several programs designed to increase public access to and confidence in the courts, including a legal resources center for the Spanish-speaking community. ■

# Council Pledges Support To Improve Foster Care

## The Pew Commission

Created in May 2003, the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care is a national, nonpartisan panel funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and composed of experts in child welfare. The commission's members include some of the nation's leading child welfare experts, administrators of child welfare agencies, judges, social workers, a state legislator, a child psychologist, foster and adoptive parents, a former foster youth, and other stakeholders in the foster care system.

At its June business meeting, the Judicial Council adopted a resolution in support of a recent report of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care that calls for a far-reaching overhaul of the nation's foster care system.

In the resolution the council pledged that "the judicial branch will work with state and local entities and community partners to realize the commission goals, and urges Congress to act on the recommendations." Those recommendations include court reforms that would give children a higher priority in the judicial system.

"Issues involving families and children permeate our judicial system, and only recently have we begun focusing on broad strategies to address the needs of abused and neglected children, the most vulnerable members of our society," says Chief Justice Ronald M. George, chair of the Judicial Council. "I am confident that the work and recommendations of the Pew Commission will bring about significant improvements in the foster care system in this country."

### COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

For more than a year, the commission listened to judges who oversee dependency cases, managers who administer child welfare systems, and caseworkers with daily, frontline responsibility for children. It interviewed foster care professionals, scholars, and advocates; foster, adoptive, and birth parents; and foster youth. It also examined critical problems and promising approaches and undertook an extensive review of policy options.

In its recommendations, the commission focused on (1) improving court oversight of child welfare cases and (2) improving existing federal financing mechanisms.

### ROLE OF THE COURTS

The Pew Commission's report notes that courts are the entities that review cases to decide whether parents and child welfare agencies are meeting their legal obligations to a child; ensure that children are moved out of foster care and either returned home or placed in a safe, permanent home within the statutory time frame; and determine whether and when a parent's rights should be terminated and whether a child should be adopted or placed with a permanent guardian.

Recommendations for improving court performance in dependency cases will require leadership from the state judiciary. Establishing an office on children in the courts—such as the AOC's Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) in California—would demonstrate the importance of dependency issues and would help institutionalize courts' commitment to children.

To ensure that dependency cases are afforded the time, expertise, and degree of importance and attention they deserve, the commission also urges states

courts, made several financing recommendations:

- ▶ Preserve federal foster care and adoption assistance as an entitlement and expand it to all children in the foster care system;
- ▶ Provide all children who leave foster care with federal guardianship assistance to live with a permanent legal guardian when a court has explicitly determined that neither reunification nor adoption is a feasible option;
- ▶ Help states build a range of services by allowing them to "reinvest" federal and state foster care dollars in other child welfare services if they safely reduce their use of foster care; and
- ▶ Create a new program to make payments to states not only for completed adoptions but for guardianships and reunifications with children's families of origin.

### PARALLEL STUDY

CFCC's Court Improvement Program is conducting an evaluation of operations and outcomes in juvenile dependency courts, known as the Court Improvement Reassessment. Although this project began prior to the release of the Pew Commission's report, some of the project's ongoing research tasks are being modified to focus on key issues raised by the report. It is anticipated that the many of the reassessment's final recommendations will parallel those of the Pew Commission.

● To view the Pew Commission's report in its entirety, visit [www.pewfostercare.org/](http://www.pewfostercare.org/). For more information, contact Gina Russo, 202-687-0697; e-mail: [grusso@pewfostercare.org](mailto:grusso@pewfostercare.org). For more information on CFCC's Court Improvement Reassessment project, contact Mara Bernstein, CFCC, 415-865-7728; e-mail: [maria.bernstein@jud.ca.gov](mailto:maria.bernstein@jud.ca.gov). ■

So this is how it is in foster care: you always have to move from foster home to foster home and you don't have any say in this, and you are always having to adapt to new people and new kids and new schools. Sometimes you just feel like you are going crazy inside. And another thing, in foster care you grow up not knowing that you can really be somebody. When I was in foster care, it didn't seem like I had any choices or any future. All kids deserve families. They need a family, to have someone: "This is father, this is mother." They need a family so they can believe in themselves and grow up to be somebody. This is a big deal that people don't realize. I wish everyone could understand.

—Former foster youth

Citing these judicial responsibilities, the commission's report calls for:

- ▶ Adoption of court performance measures by dependency courts;
- ▶ Incentives and requirements for effective collaboration between courts and child welfare agencies;
- ▶ A strong voice for children and parents in court through effective representation by better trained attorneys and volunteer advocates; and
- ▶ Leadership from Chief Justices and other state court leaders in organizing their court systems to better serve children, provide training for judges, and promote more effective standards for dependency courts, judges, and attorneys.

"Our state judges play a critical role in protecting children who are abused or neglected," says William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts. "The proposals enhance the priority of children's cases while providing the courts with improved information, broader training opportunities for judges and staff, and other tools necessary to ensure the effective participation of children, families, and social service agencies in the judicial process."

### RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS FOR JUDICIARY

The commission notes that the implementation of its recom-

to establish courts or departments dedicated to these cases. These departments should also adopt standards of practice, a system of education, and workload measures for courts, judges, and attorneys that recognize the unique nature of dependency cases. Finally, it suggests that judges who choose to build a career on the dependency bench be permitted to opt out of routine rotation.

### FINANCING FOSTER CARE

The drafters of the report, in addition to making suggestions for



Chief Justice Ronald M. George visits Los Angeles to help preside over the court's Adoption Saturday program. Adoption Saturdays have greatly increased the number of children moved into permanent homes. California has more than 100,000 children in foster care—approximately one-fifth of the nation's foster children. Photo: Jonathan Alcon

## Council Goals for Juveniles

In its new three-year operational plan, effective January 1, 2004, the Judicial Council established goals for juvenile justice that include:

- Improving courts' management of dependency and delinquency cases. This goal includes developing a comprehensive plan for reducing the number of children in dependency cases and implementing uniform standards for the performance and oversight of court-appointed counsel in dependency and delinquency proceedings.
- Improving courts' management of family and children's cases, with particular emphasis on unifying and coordinating court procedures. This goal includes establishing and evaluating case management systems in at least six "mentor courts"; assessing the status of calendar management, coordination, and communication in at least six family and juvenile courts; and ensuring compliance with court orders to protect vulnerable parties.



# Law Day Around the State

In Santa Ana on May 6, more than 350 middle school students, the superintendent of education, members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and representatives of the judiciary gathered at the Old Courthouse to celebrate Law Day.

The event—organized by the Superior Court of Orange County—was kicked off with a flag-raising ceremony and music by the Marine Corps Band, a presentation of the colors by the Marine Corps and Sheriff's Department color guards, and a performance by members of the Walker Junior High School chorus.

Students were given a tour of the Old Courthouse; the U.S. District Courthouse; the courthouse of the state's Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District; and the superior court's Central Justice Center. They visited with justices, judges, attorneys, and courtroom staff to learn more about the legal system.

Following are brief descriptions of a few other California courts' observances of Law Day 2004.

## ALAMEDA COUNTY

In honor of Law Day and the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Superior Court of Alameda County Presiding Judge Barbara J. Miller on May 6 hosted an informal breakfast in her courtroom for fellow judges, Rotary Club members, members of the bench-bar speakers' bureau, and local students and teachers.

On the same day, the court co-hosted a luncheon with the Oakland Rotary Club that featured keynote speaker U.S. District Court Judge Thelton Henderson discussing the legacy of the *Brown v. Board* decision; the Alameda County Bar Association's presentation of the Allen E. Broussard Award for Outstanding Humanitarianism to Judge Robert Fairwell; and Judge Leopoldo E. Dorado's

honoring of high school mock trial participants.

Earlier in the week, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors presented Presiding Judge Miller with a proclamation in recognition of Law Day. At the ceremony, Presiding Judge Miller spoke about the importance of Law Day and the *Brown v. Board* decision. Copies of the proclamation are displayed in each courthouse in Alameda County.

Throughout the week, the staffs of courthouses in Alameda County gave tours to students and conducted question-and-answer sessions with judges, court staff members, district attorneys, and public defenders. The superior court also arranged for judges and attorneys to visit 37 classrooms throughout Alameda County to speak about the justice system.

The Law Day activities were organized by a committee composed of representatives of the court, Alameda County Bar Association, Alameda County Law Library, and Alameda County Office of Education.

**KERN COUNTY**

The Community Outreach Committee of the Superior Court of Kern County coordinated several events in honor of Law Day. Judge Robert S. Tafoya hosted a presentation for high school students in the board of supervisors' chambers, to enhance the students' understanding of the court system. The court coordinated an appreciation event for court docents and an Ask the Judges Night. The law library staff hosted a commemoration ceremony, an

information fair, and workshops for self-represented litigants.

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

Court representatives in Sacramento County coordinated with the Pacific Coast League's River Cats baseball team to have a formal *Brown v. Board* ceremony and Law Day poster giveaway at the team's May 5 home game. The event was sponsored by the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, and Sacramento trial court judges. In addition, during the week of May 17–21, Sacramento County judges made presentations to local high school history and government classes on the importance of the *Brown* decision.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY**

The Superior Court of San Luis Obispo County on May 6 hosted more than 300 community members at its second annual Community Law Night.

The no-cost event provided information on the legal system and local law-related resources and services. How-to clinics offered tips on small claims, traffic, landlord-tenant, personal injury, probate and estate planning, identity theft, and employment law. Judges and attorneys explained courtroom procedures and their respective roles in the process. In addition, a resource fair provided visitors with information on the community services and low-cost legal services available to them.

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

The Superior Court of Santa Clara County invited local students to submit posters on this year's Law Day theme: "To Win

## Law Day Becomes Law

President Dwight D. Eisenhower established Law Day by presidential proclamation in 1951. But it wasn't until 1961 that Congress declared May 1 "a special day of celebration by American people in appreciation of their liberties" and an occasion for "rededication to the ideals of equality and justice under laws."



Orange County jurists hosted more than 400 eighth-grade students at the Old Courthouse in Santa Ana to honor Law Day. Students and judicial and community leaders attended a flag-raising ceremony with the Marine Corps honor guard and toured the U.S. District Courthouse, the state's Fourth Appellate District courthouse, and the superior court's Central Justice Center. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Orange County*

Equality by Law: *Brown v. Board* at 50.” Prizes, which included pens, notepads, paperweights, and a desk clock, were presented to winners at their schools during the week of May 10. All entries submitted will be on display at courthouses this summer.

**SISKIYOU COUNTY**

During the week of May 17-21, the Superior Court of Siskiyou County displayed Law Day posters in its courthouse lobby and offered free Law Day materials to the public. It invited local students to take tours of the courthouse and the law library. In addition, Executive Officer Larry Gobelman gave presentations to community service organizations on the importance of Law Day and the justice system. ■

## Symposium Honors *Brown v. Board*



The California courts marked the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* with an all-day symposium at the Sacramento Convention Center on May 17. More than 300 participants attended the event, which commemorated the landmark ruling in 1954 that ended the legal basis for segregation.

The symposium featured workshops and presentations that celebrated the importance of the *Brown* decision and its legacy. Featured speakers included Chief Justice Ronald M. George and Juan Williams (pictured), a political analyst for Fox Television and correspondent for National Public Radio.

Alison Harvey, chief of staff to Senator John Burton, presented a legislative resolution recognizing the California courts for their role in commemorating the anniversary.

The symposium was one of many events held throughout the state in recent months to educate the public and court staffs about the significance of the *Brown* decision. Statewide activities included a live satellite broadcast, historical exhibits, speakers, and other educational forums.

# San Mateo Newsletter Keeps Local Bar Informed

BLAINE CORREN

An online newsletter aimed specifically at local bar association members is the latest step by the Superior Court of San Mateo County to increase and enhance communication with Bay Area attorneys.

The newsletter (also titled *Court News*) provides attorneys with updates on court procedures, operations, rules, standing orders, and calendars. It informs them of educational programs such as the court's Community Law Night and High School Mock Trial Program.

"The content is driven by the information bar members want to hear about," says Presiding Judge Mark R. Forcum, who spearheaded the project. "We regularly speak at bar lunches and visit local law firms to find out how we can improve our services and better communicate with them."

The superior court posts the newsletter to its Web site, then sends an e-mail message to local bar members with a link to the site. "We have received excellent feedback from the bar," says Peggy Thompson, the court's executive officer. "Bar members

are an integral part of the court system, so it is important to establish good lines of communication with them.”

The court published its second bar newsletter in April and hopes to continue on a quarterly basis. It also rewrites some of the content for a newsletter that it distributes to the public.

● To see the Superior Court of San Mateo County newsletter, visit the court's Web site at [www.sanmateocourt.org/](http://www.sanmateocourt.org/), or contact Jill Selvaggio, Superior Court of San Mateo County, 650-599-1519; e-mail: [jselvaggio@sanmateocourt.org](mailto:jselvaggio@sanmateocourt.org). ■



# Leading Change

*Conversation With  
Court Executive Tressa K. Kentner*



Tressa S. Kentner  
Executive Officer,  
Superior Court of  
San Bernardino  
County

*The administration of justice in the court system is the most unique and important part of government, according to Tressa S. Kentner, Executive Officer of the Superior Court of San Bernardino County. It is essential, she says, to have the best and brightest working in our courts to maintain a strong judiciary.*

*Ms. Kentner is well qualified to remark on the importance of the court system. She has served as executive officer for two courts—in Sonoma County and, since 1995, in San Bernardino County.*

*Ms. Kentner also is integral to several branchwide initiatives and has participated in working groups on trial court facilities and the Legal Services Trust Fund. She was appointed to the Judicial Council in 2002 and became chair of its Court Executives Advisory Committee this past January.*

*Court News spoke with Ms. Kentner about her work on the Court Executives Advisory Committee and the committee's impact on court administration in California.*

## **How would you describe the role of the Court Executives Advisory Committee?**

We are one of several advisory committees to the Judicial Council that assist it with issues affecting court administration. We can initiate policy discussions as well as look at issues that the council sends to us for review.

It is important to have the perspective of court executive officers, because we oversee all of the administrative operations of the courts as well as court staff. We have first-hand knowledge of how new laws or rules will impact the workings of the court. Executive officers also have a good understanding of the needs of the courts and their staffs.

## **It is important to have the perspective of court executive officers, because we oversee all of the administrative operations of the courts as well as court staff.**

In addition, we work for the judges in our courts. We need to be responsive not only to the presiding judge but to all judicial officers on the bench. We must be aware of their needs and how new procedures will affect their jobs in the courtroom.

## **You convened a joint issues meeting in June. What happened there?**

The annual two-day meeting was held in June. On the first day, the Court Executives Advisory Committee and the Presiding Judges Advisory Committee held separate meetings. But the second day was a joint meeting between the two groups. On this second day, we discussed issues that are of common concern to all of us.

Issues discussed at the joint meeting included budgets, labor relations, court-county relations,

visory committees on drafting a rule of court or crafting a response to an issue affecting court operations.

Working in the opposite direction, the council can bring an issue to the committee that has a statewide impact on the courts. For example, the AOC Office of Governmental Affairs is dealing with the Legislature on a proposed bill related to exemptions of certain individuals from jury duty. The council and the AOC brought this issue to our committee to gain local courts' perspective on how this would affect jury operations.

## **The committee has had some impact on almost every aspect of court administration.**

and other topics of current interest. It gave participants a chance to get updated on the latest developments, present their points of view, and participate in discussions. It also served as a way to create a dialogue and share information among the council, the AOC, and the courts.

## **What are the top priorities for the Court Executives Advisory Committee?**

This time of year, the need for stable statewide funding and providing for individual court

The advisory committee can also be a conduit for increasing communication within the branch. For example, the committee can relay to court staffs the messages and goals that the council has incorporated into its strategic and operational plans.

## **Has this process changed in the last few years? How might it change in the future?**

I don't know that the role of the committee has evolved substantially, but the issues we are involved with have changed and

tional matters will have been worked out, and we may find ourselves dealing with a new set of challenges.

## **What impact has the Court Executives Advisory Committee had on judicial administration in California?**

The committee has had some impact on almost every aspect of court administration. We are, in many ways, the institutional memory for the court system. There are individuals that have been on this committee for many

years. The same cannot be said for the members of the presiding judges' committee or the Judicial Council itself, because most of their members change every two or three years.

## **What advice do you have for new court executives?**

There is so much going on in the field of court administration in California right now. There is a tremendous opportunity to have an effect on the development of the court system. At this time of transition for the judicial branch,

## **At this time of transition for the judicial branch, it is important to stay positive, look for what works, and not dwell on the negative aspects of change.**

budgets are always big issues. That includes figuring out how best to incorporate reductions in the budget for court security that are reflected in the Governor's budget proposal.

At our most recent meeting, we had a lively discussion about a recent Attorney General opinion on the payment of expert

we are approaching them from a different perspective. Ten years ago, court operations were more of a county function. Court executives were not as involved with issues related to statewide governance and infrastructure.

Now that the Judicial Council's responsibilities have grown in terms of court budgets and human resources, the advisory

it is important to stay positive, look for what works, and not dwell on the negative aspects of change. That doesn't mean you can't be critical, but make sure to look at both sides of an issue.

It is important for court executives to interact with their colleagues. Share information, look for new ideas, and be a part of what's going on around the state. Get on committees, go to conferences, and be involved.

Talk to more than just the immediate counties in your area. Large courts can learn from small courts, and small courts can learn from large ones. Never get stuck in a rut, and always be looking for better ways to do things. ■

committee gets more involved in these council issues as well. All the issues that were county functions and are now under the purview of the council are filtered through the court executives.

At this time, many transitional issues still need to be addressed. For example, the committee and court executives are in the middle of issues surrounding the transfer of court facilities from the counties to the state. In the future, these transi-

## **How does the committee work with the Judicial Council on policy issues?**

We may bring up an issue, like the Attorney General's opinion, to the council and the AOC. We may work with the AOC Office of General Counsel or other ad-





## Mental Health Courts

# Consequences of “Trans-Institutionalization”



Judge Donald E. Shaver  
Superior Court  
of Stanislaus  
County

JUDGE DONALD E. SHAVER

The last half-century has seen dramatic changes in the delivery of public mental health services. The development of new psychiatric drugs has led to increased reliance on outpatient treatment. This, in turn, has led to “de-institutionalization” of the mentally ill and the closure of many of the large state-run residential psychiatric hospitals.

But as the number of hospitalized mentally ill shrank by 85 percent over the past half century, state and federal governments found uses for the savings other than directing them to community-based outpatient services. Consequently, accessing mental health services has become increasingly difficult for many individuals.

Over the same time period, U.S. jail and prison populations increased nearly tenfold, and the proportion of persons in custody with serious mental health conditions increased dramatically. The Department of Justice estimates this figure at 16 percent, and the National Commission on Correctional Health believes it may be as high as 27 percent of those in custody at any given time, in comparison with a historical average of 1 percent or less. The current percentage for juveniles is higher, with as many as 40 percent considered seriously emotionally disturbed.

This trend has caused some to believe that the “de-institutionalization” was really more of a “trans-institutionalization,” with the result that the largest “mental health treatment facility” in the nation today is the Los Angeles County Jail.

### RESTRUCTURING THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

It is no surprise that Joe Lovelace, past-president of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill ([www.nami.org/](http://www.nami.org/)) and currently its public policy consultant, contends the public

mental health system does not need to be fixed—rather, it needs to be totally replaced. He points to the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health ([www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/)), which, in its report *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America*, called today’s mental health care system a “patchwork relic.” The commission recommended a “fundamental transformation” of the nation’s approach to mental health care.

Michael Hogan, Ph.D., the commission’s chair, states that mental health courts are an important part of the reform of public mental health services. He concludes that they not only are needed to help process cases but should be included as a component of restructuring the entire public mental health system.

Some states, in fact, have done as much already. The Idaho Legislature created that state’s mental health court as a formal division of the courts. In Ohio the Supreme Court, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, has established a task force in every county to facilitate mental health courts or specialized dockets. Of the current 90-plus mental health courts nationwide, 12 are in Ohio.

### MENTAL HEALTH COURTS IN CALIFORNIA

California’s experience has mirrored the national trend. The Milton Marks Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy (better known as the Little Hoover Commission), in a scathing November 2000 report, charged that California’s mental health system was lacking “something fundamental: a clear commitment to provide mental health services to people who need assistance.” The commission found

that Californians with mental illnesses had been dumped into prisons and left to roam the streets, and urged the state to overhaul its mental health policies. As a consequence, the focus on mental health courts as part of the solution became even sharper.

As in other states, mental health courts in California developed as an outgrowth of drug courts. Currently 14 mental health courts in California have been recognized by the Judicial Council’s Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee. The oldest are the mental health courts in San Bernardino and Santa Clara Counties, which have been in operation since 1999. The newest, in Marin County, is scheduled to be in operation this summer.

Models of mental health courts currently in use incorporate preplea diversion, postplea deferred judgment, and post-judgment probation. The mental health courts all include close judicial supervision, graduated sanctions or accountability rewards, close communication between the treatment provider and the court, and reliance on treatment rather than incarceration as the first response. Funding for these courts has been provided partially through grants from the California Board of Corrections’ Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Grant, the California Assembly Bill 2134 Grant, California AOC mini-grants, the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, among others.

The long-term effectiveness of mental health courts is still being evaluated at the state and federal levels. At this point, there is every reason to expect that these courts will prove to be as cost-effective and successful as drug courts have shown themselves to be.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Where should mental health courts go from here? Two specific areas seem to stand out. The first is dual-diagnosis cases, and the second is competency cases.

The term “dual diagnosis” is generally applied to individuals with both a significant drug addiction and a separate, significant mental health condition. Their cases are usually difficult to treat through standard drug protocols because of the complexity of the dual diagnosis. Often it is difficult to determine which diagnosis to treat first or whether both should be approached at the same time and, if so, how. Consequently, many times defendants are excluded from drug court programs.

Dual-diagnosis courts have been developed, as an offshoot

of drug courts, to handle this problem. Because dual-diagnosis courts are sometimes classed as drug courts or mental health courts, it is difficult to say how many are currently operating in California and the nation, but the trend seems to be to develop a separate category and mission for this type of court.

Competency cases are a problem area for mental health courts, as well. If a defendant is not capable of understanding the nature of the criminal proceedings pending against him or her or is not able to assist his or her counsel due to a mental condition, criminal proceedings can be suspended under Penal Code section 1368. Most mental health courts do not handle cases in which competency is an issue.

Traditionally, once the defendant has been found incompetent, he or she is committed to a state hospital and goes through courtroom training to become familiar with the criminal justice system. Typically the defendant does not receive treatment for the underlying condition, although he or she may receive medications for it. The goal is simply to prepare the defendant for prosecution by the district attorney. If the defendant is successfully prosecuted and placed on probation, he or she may end up in mental health court.

The problem is that often the process of “restoring competency” can be lengthy. Often defendants spend considerable time in custody waiting for available space at the state hospital or waiting for court proceedings. Their condition frequently deteriorates during these times, leading to multiple courses of competency restoration. In the meantime, treatment for the underlying condition is deferred indefinitely while efforts are focused on getting the patient through the criminal justice process.

Diversion to a mental health treatment court designed for cases with competency issues could streamline this process and achieve the goal of preventing further criminal conduct in a much more effective and cost-efficient manner than Penal Code section 1368 proceedings. While it is true that section 1368 proceedings are usually reserved for relatively serious felony matters, many of which would not be suitable for diversion to a mental health court, this is not universally true. There are undoubtedly hundreds of cases statewide currently going through section 1368 proceedings that would be better handled in a mental health court setting.

Judge Shaver attended the Second National Conference on Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System on May 20 in Columbus, Ohio. ■

## News From the AOC

The Administrative Office of the Courts publishes several newsletters about aspects of court business. Visit these online on the California Courts Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/) or on Serranus, the password-protected site of the state judicial branch, at <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/>. To subscribe to any of the newsletters, e-mail [pubinfo@jud.ca.gov](mailto:pubinfo@jud.ca.gov).

### Capitol Connection

Monthly update on legislative issues affecting the judicial branch and information regarding the legislative process. Distributed monthly via e-mail. See [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/aoc/capconn.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/aoc/capconn.htm).

### Court News

Award-winning bimonthly newsmagazine for court leaders, reporting on developments in court administration statewide. Indexed from 2000 at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtnews/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtnews/).

### HR Connect

Monthly update on human resources issues and programs in the state judicial branch. See [http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/hr/hr\\_connect.htm](http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/hr/hr_connect.htm).

## Spread The News

Tell *Court News* about innovative programs and services at your court so that we can share your experience with your colleagues.

Send the information via mail to:

Blaine Corren, *Court News*  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688

Phone: 415-865-7449

Fax: 415-865-4334

E-mail: [blaine.corren@jud.ca.gov](mailto:blaine.corren@jud.ca.gov)



## Education & Development

### First Statewide Interpreters Conference

More than 400 participants are expected at the first Statewide Interpreters Conference on September 18 in Universal City.

The theme of the conference, “One Voice: A Community of Interpreters,” reflects the interpreting community’s shared goal: to ensure that every limited-English-speaking, deaf, or hearing-impaired Californian has access to a qualified interpreter in court proceedings. The conference, the first AOC-sponsored statewide forum for interpreters, is meant to help build a sense of community and shared vision among the state’s interpreters and enable them to come together as a group and discuss issues that are challenging the profession.

#### DISCUSSION TOPICS

The plenary sessions at the conference will include a discussion of confidentiality and privileged communication by a panel of judges; a session on voice preservation; and a special keynote address from Holly Mikkelsen. Ms. Mikkelsen, an adjunct professor of Spanish translation and interpretation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, is the author of many training products for interpreters and has been a professional court interpreter and translator since 1976.

Workshops to be offered at the conference include: Relay Interpreting of Indigenous Mexican Languages, Team Interpreting, Mentoring, Application of Memory Research, American Sign Language Interpreting, and sessions that focus on interpreting languages other than Spanish.

● For more information, contact Janette Zupnik, AOC Court Interpreters Program Unit, 415-865-4263; e-mail: [janette.zupnik@jud.ca.gov](mailto:janette.zupnik@jud.ca.gov).

### Conference Builds on 10 Years of Addressing Family Violence

Court leaders will come together to build on a decade of court and community responses to domestic violence at the Family Violence and the Courts: 10th Anniversary Conference, which will take place September 9–10 in San Francisco.

The conference will present a process for assessing courts’ responses to family violence; a method of planning with community partners for enhancing those responses; and a forum in which courts can learn about improving access, practice, procedure, and administration in domestic violence cases.

#### LOCAL TEAMS

The conference will be an invitation-only event for judicial officers and staff. A court team of at least four people from each county will attend. Each of the teams will include a presiding or assistant presiding judge, a court executive officer or senior-level deputy executive officer, a judicial officer with expertise in domestic violence cases, and the family court services director or a senior-level staff member with extensive experience in domestic violence cases.

In advance of the conference, each team will convene a local meeting, bringing together a variety of justice system profes-

sionals and community representatives. Participants will reflect on a series of topics designed to elicit feedback about domestic violence cases. The court teams will work on specific issues in their action planning meetings and use that information to develop broad goals for improving their courts’ responses to domestic violence cases.

At the conference, national and state experts and community group representatives will serve as faculty and facilitators for workshops designed to meet courts’ needs, as identified in the local planning meetings. Peter Jaffe, Executive Director of the London Family Court Clinic of Ontario, Canada, and Sujata Warriar, Director of the Health Care Bureau for the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, are two of the faculty members who will help lead discussions.

#### POSTCONFERENCE ACTION PLANS

After the conference, the local teams will be asked to submit detailed action plans to the Ad-

ministrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC). By engaging in planning meetings both before and after the conference, the teams will have an opportunity to engage with community partners while at the same time identifying and working on challenging issues.

The results of the local meetings, the conference proceedings, and the specific local objectives will be published and will be the basis for a statewide strategic plan for enhancing the courts’ response to domestic violence cases. The plan will also provide a guide to the AOC in the event that future funding for local initiatives becomes available.

The conference was designed by CFCC and is sponsored by the Judicial Council’s Criminal Law, Family and Juvenile Law, Trial Court Presiding Judges, and Court Executives Advisory Committees.

● For more information, contact Tamara Abrams, CFCC, 415-865-7712; e-mail: [tamara.abrams@jud.ca.gov](mailto:tamara.abrams@jud.ca.gov). ■



The California court system’s public Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/) and Serranus, the courts’ password-protected Web site, at <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/> continually add information and features to keep the public, judges, and court staff up to date on judicial programs and resources. Following are recent additions.

#### Updated Trial Court Financial Manual

The fourth edition of the *Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures Manual* became effective on July 1. All sections of the manual have been updated, with special emphasis on contracts and travel procedures.

[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/tcfp/tcfpman\\_4ed.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/tcfp/tcfpman_4ed.htm)

#### CARS Training Guides

Step-by-step guides to the judicial branch’s Court Accounting and Reporting System (CARS) offer instructions on filling out individual reports, including those involving balance sheets, encumbrances, and revenue and expenditures.

[http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/finance/cars/training\\_guides.htm](http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/finance/cars/training_guides.htm)

#### Help With Court Records Management

An updated section of Serranus assists trial courts in implementing legislative and Judicial Council requirements related to the management of court records.

<http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/courtrec/>

#### Updated Judicial Attorney Manual Online

The *California Court of Appeal Judicial Attorney Manual*, a comprehensive reference for both new and experienced attorneys who work in the appellate courts, has been updated to reflect current practices and procedures, including the significant changes in legal research brought about by advances in electronic information technology.

[http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/education/jbradio/documents/jam\\_manual.pdf](http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/education/jbradio/documents/jam_manual.pdf)

#### Survey Results on Court-Based Child Custody Mediation

A new *Research Update* from the AOC Center for Families, Children & the Courts reports the results of a survey of parents involved in court-based child custody mediations.

[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/Clientfdbk.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/Clientfdbk.pdf)

#### Assistance for Community Justice Programs

The California Community Justice Project promotes awareness and understanding of community justice principles and practices, facilitates information sharing, and assists in the development of local programs.

[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/ccjp/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/ccjp/)

#### Updated Judicial Council Profile

The third edition of the *Profile*, an informative 44-page booklet, summarizes the history, role, structure, and membership of the Judicial Council.

[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/jc/documents/profilejc.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/jc/documents/profilejc.pdf)

● Not a Serranus user? For access, e-mail [serranus@jud.ca.gov](mailto:serranus@jud.ca.gov).

### Eighth Annual AB 1058 Child Support Training Conference September 22–24, San Jose

The annual Assembly Bill 1058 Child Support Training Conference brings together child support commissioners, family law facilitators, administrators, accounting staff, and court clerks who are working in the child support enforcement system under title IV-D of the Social Security Act, to update them on the latest developments in the area of child support. Conference participants will learn about:

- Recent developments at the Department of Child Support Services;
- New child support legislation;
- Court forms; and
- Budget, accounting, and administrative issues.

Workshop topics will include Court Clerk Training, Accounting and Administration, Legislative Update, and Data Collection.

● For more information, visit the Center for Families, Children & the Courts Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/) or contact Carolyn Castaneda, 415-865-7675; e-mail: [carolynn.castaneda@jud.ca.gov](mailto:carolynn.castaneda@jud.ca.gov).



## Resources

### New Court Statistics Released

Total court system filings in California decreased slightly in 2002–2003, according to the 2004 Court Statistics Report.

Superior court filings declined 4.8 percent to just under 8 million, while appellate court filings decreased by 1.2 percent to 30,905.

The report, a companion volume to the Judicial Council's *Annual Report* to the Governor and Legislature, was posted to the California Courts Web site in June. Drawing from the Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS), the report provides detailed data—for the state and for each of the 58 counties—on fiscal year 2002–2003 court workloads as well as 10-year trends in a wide range of court business.

JBSIS was developed to improve the timeliness and accuracy of the statistical data used by courts and other branches of government to form state and local policy. It is the primary source of caseload and workload data throughout the judicial branch. The JBSIS Web site (<http://jbsis.courts.ca.gov/>) gives courts immediate access to current and historical statistics. It is a secure site that is available only to courts and to others who are authorized to use it via a password.

● The 2004 Court Statistics Report is available on the California Courts Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/3\\_stats.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/3_stats.htm). A print edition, containing only statewide data, can be obtained by calling the California Courts Infoline at 800-900-5980. ■

### Judicial Librarians



The state's judicial law librarians held their annual meeting this year on May 5 at the Fourth District of the Court of Appeal, in Santa Ana. The group discussed and shared information on budgets, Web sites and online resources, strategic planning, cataloging, LexisNexis and Thomson/West, and the rapidly changing landscape of information available to court libraries.

Attending the meeting were (front, left to right) Terry Lynch, Fourth Appellate District, Division Two; Fran Jones, California Judicial Center Library; Gary Kitajo, Administrative Office of the Courts; Nanna Frye, Fourth Appellate District, Division One; Mary Crosby, Second Appellate District; Linda Sharp, California Judicial Center Library; Linda Wallihan, Third Appellate District; (back, left to right) Brad Wilson, California Judicial Center Library; Carol Ebbinghouse, Second Appellate District; Donna Williams, Sixth Appellate District; and Clint Rees, Fourth Appellate District, Division Three. (Not pictured: Kathy Pearce, Fifth Appellate District.) Photo: Courtesy of the Court of Appeal, Sixth Appellate District

### Sonoma Court JBSIS-Friendly

The Superior Court of Sonoma County on March 1 joined the courts in Lake, Madera, and Santa Clara Counties in being among the first to complete all JBSIS (Judicial Branch Statistical Information System) reports to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The Sonoma County court is submitting the reports electronically in XML format.

The JBSIS Web site (<http://jbsis.courts.ca.gov/>) was developed to improve the timeliness and accuracy of data used by courts and other branches of government and is the primary source of caseload and workload data throughout the judicial branch. Currently 31 courts are reporting electronically to the JBSIS database, and the branch anticipates increasing the number with the development of the California Case Management System.

The Sonoma County court rewrote most of the programming in its case management system to make it JBSIS-compliant. Working through its internal committees, the court adopted a new register by which a series of codes is shared among divisions. As part of this two-year process—a collaborative effort of court and county staff—the former municipal and superior court registers were merged into one user-friendly version containing uniform language and programming.



On March 10 the Superior Court of Sonoma County hosted Administrative Director of the Courts William C. Vickrey, AOC Chief Deputy Director Ron Overholt, AOC Northern/Coastal Regional Director Christine Patton, and county staff (pictured with court staff) to celebrate the court's JBSIS milestone. Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Sonoma County

## Court Briefs

### Helping Kids at Risk

With the help of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County and community partners, a group of truant students at Morada Middle School in the Lodi Unified School District have learned the benefits of staying in school. The students recently completed a pilot truancy court program organized by the superior court. All the students but one improved their attendance, and several showed dramatic improvement.

Principal Steve Takemoto says there was a valuable side benefit for the kids as well. "Grades and self-confidence also improved," he says. "I can't thank Judge [Richard] Vlavianos enough for selecting Morada as a pilot site."

"I look for achievements to praise rather than for lapses and mistakes to criticize," says Judge Vlavianos, who presides over the juvenile court. "Chronic truancy can be the start of a downward spiral that leads to illiteracy, drug use, and delinquency. We can and we should intervene to get these kids back on the right path. This program has great potential to do that."

#### HOW IT WORKS

Truancy court is a proactive intervention and prevention program that reaches out to kids at an early stage of truancy, well before they enter the juvenile court system. Students and their parents volunteer to meet with the judge on campus each week to track progress and to respond to stumbles. The judge reviews attendance records, behavior, and academic performance.

The team also includes a probation officer and/or a case manager who functions as a family advocate. The advocate attends the weekly meetings to link the family to the needed support services.

Students' achievements each week earn them small rewards such as books and calculators, movie passes, refreshments, and a round of applause. When back-

sliding occurs, students are encouraged to change their behavior.

Schools stand to benefit financially from a reduction in truancy. Lodi Unified loses about \$1 million per year in state funding because students don't show up, according to school officials. Morada Middle School realized more than \$7,000 in savings during the 10-week program.

Partners in the first phase of the pilot project included the county probation department and the Community Partnership for Families. Financial support is provided by the county deputy sheriffs' association, the Law Enforcement Management Association, and the A. G. Spanos Company.

● For more information, contact Rosa Junqueiro, Executive Officer, Superior Court of San Joaquin County, 209-468-2539; [rjunqueiro@courts.san-joaquin.ca.us](mailto:rjunqueiro@courts.san-joaquin.ca.us).

### Alameda's Juvenile Justice Forum

A recent forum organized by the Superior Court of Alameda County gave community members an opportunity to gain information about the issues surrounding juvenile justice and to learn about the organizations and individuals working on behalf of youth in Alameda County. The event was held on May 15 and was co-hosted by Glad Tidings Church in Hayward.

The South County Juvenile Justice Forum brought together the justice community (judges, district attorney's office, public defender's office, and probation department), service providers, faith-based organizations, school representatives, youth, parents, and neighborhood associations. The forum presented participants with an opportunity to discuss juvenile justice issues and seek collaborative and creative solutions to critical concerns of the community.

The format consisted of panels, discussion groups, and a

*Continued on page 15*



Superior Court of San Joaquin County Judge Richard Vlavianos (seated, second from left) offers congratulations to graduates of the county's truancy court program at a ceremony held on May 19 at Morada Middle School in Lodi. Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County



## Court Briefs

Continued from page 14

question-and-answer session with members of the justice community and service providers. The forum’s organizers distributed informational brochures about the court and the *Com-*

*munity Resource Guide*, a compilation of service agencies available to assist families and youth, prepared especially for the event.

The forum’s planning committee consisted of representatives of the justice system, service providers, and local high school students. A grant awarded by the

Foundation of the State Bar of California helped fund the event.

The forum was part of the court’s overall strategic plan, which includes engaging community members and service organizations and increasing communication and understanding of the operations of the juvenile court. The court held a

similar forum last fall in northern Alameda County.

● For more information, contact Vicki Ward, Juvenile Court Administrator, 510-268-4104; e-mail: [vward@alameda.courts.ca.gov](mailto:vward@alameda.courts.ca.gov). ■

## Milestones

Public Counsel, a Los Angeles pro bono law office that assists low-income individuals, presented **Chief Justice Ronald M. George** with its William O. Douglas Award. The award, the organization’s highest honor, is given to a national figure who works to protect equal access to justice, freedom of expression, and equal rights under the law. Past honorees include former Vice President Al Gore, Senator George Mitchell, civil rights lawyer Morris Dees, and author Alex Haley.

The John M. Langston Bar Association in Los Angeles named **Superior Court of Los Angeles County Judge Eric C. Taylor** its Bernard S. Jefferson Justice of the Year. The award recognizes “exemplary achievements in the legal profession and commitment to the Langston Bar Association.”

Judge Taylor has served as both site judge and presiding judge of the Inglewood courthouse and as assistant and supervising judge of the Los Angeles County court’s Southwest District. He currently serves as president of the California Judges Association and as a member of the Judicial Council.

The Juvenile Court Judges of California honored **Superior Court of Ventura County Judge John E. Dobroth** with its Wilmont Sweeney Award. The award recognizes a judicial officer who is dedicated to juvenile law issues and has made a difference in the juvenile arena.

The Alumni Association of Southwestern University School of Law named **Superior Court of Los Angeles County Judge Bob T. Hight** its 2004 Outstanding Judicial Officer. The honor is given to an alumnus or alumna of the school who, as a member of the judiciary, has earned the recognition of his or her community and peers and who has made significant contributions to the legal profession and the law school.

The National Child Support Enforcement Association named **Commissioner Peter Twede** its 2004 Judicial Officer of the Year. The association promotes the well-being of children through professional development, advocacy, and public

awareness. Commissioner Twede serves in the Superior Courts of Colusa, Glenn, Plumas, and Tehama Counties.

**Assistant Clerk/Administrator Kevin Lane** of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, became a fellow of the Institute of Court Management, an educational arm of the National Center for State Courts. The institute’s four-phase fellowship program prepares participants for leadership positions in the courts.

The Yolo County Bar Association presented court employee **Langston C. “Jack” Jackson, Jr.**, with its 2004 Liberty Bell Award.

The Liberty Bell Award was established more than 30 years ago to acknowledge outstanding community service by a non-lawyer who has promoted respect for law and the courts. Mr. Jackson is a human resources technician with the court and was nominated for his volunteer work in the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program.

The San Joaquin Valley Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates presented **Nadine Limi** with its Court Clerk Civility Award. The award recognizes her outstanding professionalism and civility in the courtroom. Ms. Limi has been a court clerk in Kern County since 1972.

The National Association for Court Management presented the **Superior Court of Orange County** with its Justice Achievement Award in recognition of the court’s I-CAN!™ (Interactive Community Assistance Network) project.

Through the I-CAN! project, the court has set up high-speed touch-screen kiosks that allow users access to the court’s approximately 575 forms for civil, small claims, family law, probate, and criminal matters.

The **Superior Court of San Bernardino County** received the Innovation Award at the Third Annual California Judicial Branch Human Resources Conference. The court was honored for its interactive Court Virtual Education and Training program. The program resides on the court’s Intranet site, so it is accessible to all court employees.

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women awarded the **Superior Court of Santa Clara County** a \$1.2 million federal grant. The Office on Violence Against Women is conducting a four-year demonstration project to examine the most promising practices of supervised visitation centers to keep victims of domestic violence and their children safe from further abuse.

The family court in Santa Clara County refers hundreds of families to supervised visitation programs each year. The court worked in collaboration with the Counties of San Mateo and Santa Cruz to secure the grant, one of only four awarded in the nation. ■

## L.A. Honors Temporary Judges



Hundreds of attorneys were honored on May 19 in a ceremony organized by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County to recognize volunteers who serve as temporary judges. During 2003, more than 850 attorneys participated in the court’s Temporary Judge Program. The volunteers contributed a combined 5,380 days, representing nearly \$3 million in cost savings for the court. Los Angeles Judges Mary Thorton House (left) and Anne Harwood Egerton present a certificate of appreciation to attorney Alan Friedenthal, who served as a temporary judge for more than 100 days last year. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County*



## AOC-TV Guide

AUG 3, Orientation to the Judicial Branch, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

AUG 10, California Courts News (CCN), 9:00 and 9:30 a.m.; 12:15 and 12:45 p.m.

AUG 11, Today’s Law: Probate Law Update, 12:15–1:15 p.m.

AUG 17, Court Operations Training for Managers and Supervisors, 9:00–10:30 a.m.; 3:00–4:30 p.m.

AUG 23, Sexual Harassment Training for Staff, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

AUG 24, Sexual Harassment Training for Staff, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

AUG 27, Sexual Harassment Training for Staff, 2:30–3:30 p.m.; 3:30–4:30 p.m.

AUG 31, Continuing the Dialogue: Accessibility for Persons With Disabilities, 9:00–10:00 a.m.; 12:15–1:15 p.m.

SEP 1, Great Minds: (topic to be announced), 12:15–1:15 p.m.

SEP 7, Orientation to the Judicial Branch, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

SEP 14, California Courts News (CCN), 9:00 and 9:30 a.m.; 12:15 and 12:45 p.m.

SEP 21, Court Operations Training for Managers and Supervisors, 9:00–10:30 a.m.; 3:00–4:30 p.m.

SEP 22, Presiding Judge and Court Executive Officer Roundtable, 12:15–1:00 p.m.

SEP 27, Juvenile Dependency Training for Staff, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

SEP 28, Juvenile Dependency Training for Staff, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

OCT 1, Juvenile Dependency Training for Staff, 2:30–3:30 p.m.; 3:30–4:30 p.m.

OCT 5, Orientation to the Judicial Branch, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

OCT 12, California Courts News (CCN), 9:00 and 9:30 a.m.; 12:15 and 12:45 p.m.

OCT 13, Inside Justice: (topic to be announced), 12:15–1:15 p.m.

OCT 19, Court Operations Training for Managers and Supervisors, 9:00–10:30 a.m.; 3:00–4:30 p.m.

OCT 25, Juvenile Delinquency Training for Staff, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

OCT 26, Juvenile Delinquency Training for Staff, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

OCT 29, Juvenile Delinquency Training for Staff, 2:30–3:30 p.m.; 3:30–4:30 p.m.

*(Broadcast times are subject to change.)*

● For more information on AOC-TV broadcasts, visit [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/cjer](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/cjer), or contact Jay Harrell, 415-865-7753; e-mail: [jay.harrell@jud.ca.gov](mailto:jay.harrell@jud.ca.gov). Viewing locations for each court are listed at <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/aocvtv/locations.htm>







AUG 5-10	American Bar Association Annual Conference, Atlanta
AUG 9-13	National Association of State Judicial Educators Annual Conference, Baltimore
SEP 18	First Statewide Interpreters Conference, Universal City, California
OCT 7-10	National Association of Women Judges Annual Conference, Indianapolis
OCT 7-10	State Bar of California Annual Meeting, Monterey
OCT 8-10	California Judges Association Annual Meeting, Monterey
OCT 24-29	American Judges Association Annual Educational Conference, San Francisco

AUG 27                      OCT 15

● Contact: Secretariat, 415-865-7640; e-mail:  
jcservices@jud.ca.gov.  
Judicial Council meeting information is also posted on the  
California Courts Web site at  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/jc/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/jc/).

AUG 2-4	Criminal Law Institute, San Diego
AUG 2-6	Continuing Judicial Studies Program, San Diego
AUG 4-6	Civil Law Institute, San Diego
AUG 5	Court Collections Program Training, Fresno
AUG 16-27	Court Clerk Training Institute, Los Angeles
AUG 20	ADA/Access Coordinators' Training, Burbank
SEP 22	ADA/Access Coordinators' Training, San Francisco
OCT 4	ADA/Access Coordinators' Training, Sacramento
OCT 22	ADA/Access Coordinators' Training, Burbank
OCT 25-29	Continuing Judicial Studies Program, Burlingame
OCT 25-27	Criminal Law Institute, Burlingame
OCT 27-29	Presiding Judge/Court Executive Officer Orientation and Court Management Program, Burlingame

AUG 11	Comprehensive Collection Program, Sacramento
AUG 13	Comprehensive Collection Program, Burbank

SEP 15	San Diego
SEP 22	San Bernardino
SEP 23	San Bernardino
OCT 1	Stockton
OCT 8	Monterey
OCT 9	Monterey
OCT 14	Whittier
OCT 21	Bakersfield

OCT 18–22      New Judge Orientation, San Francisco

OCT 7 Labor Relations Regional Forum, Sacramento

SEP 15-17 Court Security Seminar, San Diego

OCT 28	Family Dispute Resolution Training, Burbank
OCT 29	Family Dispute Resolution Training, Riverside

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) staff welcome your questions, suggestions, and feedback. The AOC Phone and Subject Matter Referral Lists contain contact numbers for all AOC employees, listed both alphabetically and by division and unit. The referral list provides contacts for information on specific topics related to the agency's work on behalf of the courts and the public.

The AOC Phone and Subject Matter Referral Lists can be viewed at [http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/documents/smr\\_list.pdf](http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/documents/smr_list.pdf).

## COURT NEWS

is published bimonthly by the  
Judicial Council of California,  
Administrative Office of the  
Courts. It welcomes news about  
California's courts and their  
programs, projects, and  
personnel. Editorial and  
circulation offices: 455 Golden  
Gate Avenue, San Francisco,  
CA 94102-3688,  
415-865-7740, e-mail:  
pubinfo@jud.ca.gov

© 2004 Judicial Council of  
California/Administrative  
Office of the Courts

*Chief Justice and  
Chair, Judicial Council*  
Ronald M. George

*Administrative Director  
of the Courts*  
William C. Vickrey

Chief Deputy Director  
Ronald G. Overholt

Office of Communications  
Manager/Executive Editor  
James Carroll

*Managing Editor/Writer*  
Blaine Corren

*Contributing Writers*  
Paula Bocciardi  
Lynn Holton  
Leanne Kozak  
Tim Newman  
Mark Pothier

*Copy Editor*  
Mary Nelson

*Design and Production*  
Sheila Ng

This newsmagazine is  
printed on recycled and  
recyclable paper.



## COURT NEWS

Judicial Council of California  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688

First Class Mail  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
San Francisco, CA  
Permit No. 4118

Visit the California Courts Web site at  
**[www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov)**